

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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SUBJECT: ENCOURAGING POLITICAL SIGNS IN BURUNDI

REF: BUJUMBURA A-7, 18 FEB 77

1. SUMMARY. WHILE IT IS OUR NORMAL PRACTICE TO CONFINE GENERAL POLITICAL COMMENTARY TO QUARTERLY REPORTS (REFAIRGRAM), THERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN SOME ENCOURAGING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN BURUNDI WHICH DESERVE NOTICE. OF COURSE, THEY DO NOT RPT NOT HERALD THE MILLENIUM, BECAUSE THE INHERENT DISABILITIES OF BURUNDI AND THE INHERITED ILLS OF THE MICOBERO ERA ARE BOTH SO LEGION THAT IMPROVEMENTS CAN ONLY BE PAINFUL AND GRADUAL. HOWEVER, THE NEW REGIME IS GAINING SELF-CONFIDENCE, IS STILL PROCLAIMING AND TRYING TO CARRY OUT ITS IDEALS, AND HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL ACTIONS TO FACILITATE ITS MANY TASKS. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE EARLY JANUARY, PRESIDENT BAGAZA HAS BEEN TOURING ALL THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS TO SHOW HIMSELF, DRIVE HOME HIS REFORM PROGRAM, AND GET FEEDBACK FROM THE PEOPLE. FOR HOURS IN EACH PLACE HE HAS HAD QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS AND LESSER FOLK, AND HE HAS BEEN FORCED TO ADDRESS CONFIDENTIAL

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HIMSELF TO A WIDE CATALOGUE OF GRIEVANCES, WHICH THE MEDIA HAVE REPORTED. THE CULMINATION OF THIS PROCESS CAME ON MARCH 26 WHEN BAGAZA DELIVERED A NOTABLE SPEECH BEFORE A LARGE GATHERING OF BUJUMBURA'S CITIZENS. IT DOES NOT DEVIATE IN BASICS FROM HIS FIRST POLICY ADDRESS OF NOVEMBER 20, BUT IT PROBABLY INCORPORATES MUCH OF WHAT HE HAS LEARNED ON HIS TRIPS.

3. IN THE SPEECH, BAGAZA ADMITS FRANKLY THAT IT IS MUCH TOO SOON TO DRAW UP A BALANCE SHEET ON HIS ADMINISTRATION. THE WOES OF THE NATION ARE TOO ENORMOUS. HE CATALOGUES SOME OF THEM -- LACK OF DOCTORS AND MEDICINES, WITH FEW DISPENSARIES REALLY WORKING; DISEASES OF MALNUTRITION AND REAL HUNGER IN MANY AREAS; MOST PEOPLE ILLITERATE, AND MORE CHILDREN BEING BORN THAN NEW CLASSROOMS BUILT; AGRICULTURE REMAINS MOST PRIMITIVE AND HAS BEEN NEGLECTED; SPECULATION AND HOARDING OF FOODSTUFFS TO PROVOKE HIGHER PRICES IS RAMPANT; SUPPOSED GOVERNMENTAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER MICOMBERO WAS PARALYZED BY CHAOS AND POLITICAL INTRIGUES ("SALON POLITICS"); CORRUPTION WAS INSTITUTIONALIZED; UPRONA PARTY WAS DORMANT AND DEBAUCHED: JUSTICE WAS UNEQUAL; NO SYSTEMATIC PLANNING WORK WAS ACHIEVED; MASSES WERE NEGLECTED WHILE A FEW WAXED RICH; AND PUBLIC PROPERTY WAS PILLAGED.

4. WITHOUT DIRECTLY MENTIONING THE HUTU-TUTSI ETHNIC PROBLEM, HE NONETHELESS REPEATS HIS CREDO IN THESE TERMS: "JUSTICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ITS WIDEST SENSE MUCH CHARATERIZE OUR NEW REGIME. EVERY HONEST CITIZEN WHO LIVES IN OUR COUNTRY AND WHO ATTENDS CONSCIENTIOUSLY TO HIS WORK, BE HE TILLER, WORKER, STUDENT, MERCHANT, OR CIVIL SERVANT, MUST FEEL IN SECURITY IN HIS OWN PERSON AND IN HIS PROPERTY. WE MUST ACHIEVE THE BUILDING OF A SYSTEM WHERE THE CONDITIONS FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT ARE EQUALLY OFFERED TO EVERYONE, AND WHERE THE LEAST PRIVILEGED, PEASANT OR OFFICIAL, IS NOT AT THE MERCY OF THE MOST RICH, THE MOST STRONG, OR SIMILAR AUTHORITY. FROM RIGHT NOW ON, WE WANT THE RIGHTS OF EACH PERSON TO BE SCRUPULOUSLY RESPECTED, AND WE APPEAR FOR THIS TO THE INTEGRITY AND ASSIDUITY OF THOSE WHO ARE ESPECIALLY CHARGED WITH RENDERING JUSTICE DAILY, AS WELL AS TO THE CONSCIENCE

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OF PARTY OFFICIALS WHO MUST CLOSELY FOLLOW THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THEIR JURISDICTIONS." (I SHOULD ADD THAT FONMIN MUGANGA, ON MARCH 30, EXPLICITLY RAISED THE ETHNIC ISSUE WITH MY BY VOLUNTEERING THAT THE REGIME WOULD SPARE NO EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM, THAT IT RECOGNIZED MUTUAL FEAR AS THE CORE OF PAST EXCESSES, AND THAT HUTUS WOULD BE BROUGHT INTO FULL PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL LIFE, EVEN THE ARMY.)

5. BAGAZA REFERRED TO KEY ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS, SUCH AS THE WHOLESALE REPLACEMENT OF IMPORTANT CIVIL SERVANTS WITH NEW MEN, MOSTLY IN THEIR TWENTIES, WHO ARE NOT ONLY FULL OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, BUT DEDICATED TO WORK. HE WARNED THAT THE CRACKDOWN WOULD BE MERCILESS IF ANY OF THEM SUCCUMBED TO THE CORRUPTION OF THEIR PREDECESSORS. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE NEW EMPHASIS ON COORDINATION OF THE WHOLE ADMINISTRATION BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND ON RIGID ADHERENCE TO PLANNING GUIDELINES AND PRIORITIES. (WE HAVE OBSERVED WITH MUCH SATISFACTION THE BUSINESSLIKE NATURE OF THE NEW MIDDLE-LEVEL AND SENIOR OFFICIALS, WHO FREQUENTLY ATTEND MEETINGS GOING ON WELL INTO THE EVENING.

MUCH, HOWEVER, REMAINS TO BE DONE IN FOLLOW-THROUGH ON CURRENT BUSINESS AND IN MEETING DEADLINES, AND THIS WILL BE A MATTER OF MANY YEARS, NOT MONTHS.)

6. BAGAZA AGAIN FORECAST A KEY ROLE IN POLITICAL PLANNING, CITIZEN MOBILIZATION, AND GENERAL SUPERVISION TO THE UPRONA PARTY, (AND WE KNOW THAT HE IS GIVING HOUSE OF HIS OWN TIME TO REVIVING THAT ENTITY). HE SAID THE PARTY MUST BE A TRANSMISSION BELT IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, WITH POPULAR IDEAS AND GRIEVANCES PASSED TO THE TOP, AND WITH CLEAR DIRECTIVES AND DISCIPLINE IMPOSED FROM ABOVE. (WHILE THIS HAS AUTHORITARIAN OVERTONES, IT IS CLEAR THAT WITHOUT SUCH PRESSURE FROM ON HIGH, LITTLE WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS HIGHLY INDIVIDUALISTIC AND OFTEN ANARCHIC SOCIETY. BAGAZA WANTS TO MAKE THESE IMPOSITIONS ACCEPTABLE BY STARTING A MASS EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT A RELATIVELY FREE ELECTION OF PARTY ORGANS AT THE LOWEST LEVELS, WITH THOSE ELECTED CHOOSING THE NEXT HIGHER ECHELON.)

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7. ON SPECIFIC ECONOMIC POLICIES, BAGAZA REITERATED THE TOP PRIORITY TO BE ACCORDED TO AGRICULTURE, ESPECIALLY FOOD SUPPLY. IN SPEAKING BOTH ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT INDUSTRIES AND ABOUT FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE, HE STRESSED THAT FOREIGN CAPITAL WOULD BE WELCOME IF IT AGREED TO FIT ITSELF INTO BURUNDI'S

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND TO OBEY BURUNDI'S LAWS AIMED AT CURBING EXORBITANT PROFITS, TAX EVASION, SPECULATION, AND ILLEGAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE ACTIONS. HE PROMISED THERE WOULD BE NO NATIONALIZATIONS AND THAT PRIVATE INITIATIVE WOULD BE ENCOURAGED. (BAGAZA WAS QUITE EVIDENTLY TRYING TO SQUELCH RUMORS OF ANTI-BUSINESS POLICIES WHICH HAVE BEEN FOSTERED BOTH BY SOME REGIME MOVES AGAINST BUSINESSMEN CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY "IMMORAL" AND BY RADICAL-SOUNDING ARTICLES OCCASIONALLY APPEARING IN THE MEDIA. WE BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT IS A PRAGMATIC MODERATE, OUTRAGED BY PASS ILLEGALITIES, BUT NOT RPT NOT DISPOSED TO ALTER FUNDAMENTALLY THE ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY. HE HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, ENCOURAGED THE CHURCHES TO EXPAND THEIR RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES; AND, WHILE, IN THIS SPEECH, HE REFERS TO "THE VERY INTERESTING TANZANIAN EXPERIMENT", THE ASPECT HE SINGLES OUT FOR PRAISE IS NOT RPT NOT ITS SOCIALISM, BUT RATHER ITS ABILITY TO MOBILIZE AND COMMUNE WITH THE PEOPLE. IN FACT, BAGAZA NEVER ONCE USES THE WORD "SOCIALISM" IN HIS SPEECH, THOUGH HE APPROVES OF "DEMOCRATIC

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CENTRALISM" IN THE PARTY AND OF THE SLOGAN TO "FIGHT THE EXPLOITATION OF MAN BY MAN".)

8. ON FOREIGN POLICY, BAGAZA REPEATS THE STANDARD LINE OF POSITIVE NON-ALIGNMENT, INTERNATIONAL INTERDEPENDENCE AND COOPERATION, NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER STATES, SUPPORT TO NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, AND CLOSE TIES WITH NEIGHBORS. HE SAYS BURUNDI WILL AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN GREAT POWER ANTAGONISMS; WILL NEVER ACCEPT AN ALLIANCE RESTRICTING ITS SOVEREIGNTY; AND WILL NEVER ALLOW A FOREIGN MILITARY BASE ON ITS SOIL. HE PLEDGES ADHERENCE TO ALL OF BURUNDI'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND TO TREATIES IT HAS SIGNED. HE WELCOMES FOREIGN AID, AS LONG AS BURUNDI CAN SPECIFY ITS OWN DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITIES, AND HE IS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF ARAB-AFRICAN COLLABORATION. (WE DO NOT RPT NOT SEE ANY SIGNS THAT ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE USSR OR PRC, IS EXERCISING ANY PARTICULAR INFLUENCE OVER BURUNDI'S INTERNATIONAL CONDUCT. THE COMMON LINE OF ALL TOPMOST OFFICIALS IS THAT BURUNDI IS MUCH TOO POOR TO ALLOW ITSELF TO DEVELOP ANY PREFERENTIAL ORIENTATION TO FOREIGN POWERS. RATHER IT MUST BE EQUALLY OPEN TO ALL, IN ORDER TO GET THE MOST HELP FROM THE GREATEST VARIETY OF SOURCES.)

9. ALTHOUGH NOT RAISED IN THE SPEECH, WE THINK WE CAN REACH A TENTATIVE CONCLUSION ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS SWITCH IN MARCH OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF (BUJUMBURA 282), AND THIS TOO IS REASSURING ABOUT THE REGIME'S TENDENCIES. SEVERAL GOOD SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT THE FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF, SYLVERE NZOHABONAYO, WAS UNHAPPY WITH THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES AND FELT THAT AN OFFICER WITH BETTER TECHNICAL SKILLS SHOULD TAKE OVER, WHILE HE STAYED ON IN HIS SECOND JOB AS CHIEF OF THE SURETE (WHICH HAS INDEED APPARENTLY

BEEFED UP ITS ACTIVITIES LATELY TO PROTECT THE NEW REGIME).
BAGAZA USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE A MAN OF HIS OWN AGE, WHO,
COMING FROM GITEGA PROVINCE, APPARENTLY HAD NO LINKS WITH THE
MATANA FACTION OF THE BURURI GROUP (LONG ALIGNED WITH UN REP
SIMBANANIYE AND, IN PART, WITH PRIMIN NZAMBIMANA). THE NEW
CHIEF, ANTOINE NIYUNGEKO, HAS ALSO HAD A SERIOUS MILITARY
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EDUCATION, AND HE SEEMS TO HAVE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN MOBILIZING
BUJUMBURA SOLDIERS BEHIND THE COUP D'ETAT LAST NOVEMBER. THE
LIEUTENANT COLONELS AND MAJORS WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN THOUGHT OF
AS PRIME CANDIDATES TO BECOME CHIEF OF STAFF WERE PASSED OVER
ON THE GRUNDS THAT THEY EITHER HAD POLITICAL JOBS (MINISTERS
OR PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS) OR ELSE LACKED THE REQUISITE TECHNICAL
EXPERTISE. THE NEW CHIEF OF STAFF HAS SINCE BEEN BOOSTED TWO
RANKS TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL, AND HE WILL PRESUMABLY TRY TO
OVERCOME MAJOR DEFICIENCIES IN THE ARMY'S TRAINING, DISCIPLINE,
COHESION (LACKING NOW BECAUSE OF REGIONAL CLIQUES AND OF
FACTIONS CLINGING TO ONE OR MORE PERSONALITIES), AND LOGISTICS.
THE SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF TOP OFFICERS IS STILL MEETING
MONTHLY AND TAKING SOME DECISIONS ON CIVIL AFFAIRS, BUT WE HAVE
THE IMPRESSION THAT ITS MAJOR FUNCTION IS NOW ONE OF GENERAL
OVERSIGHT, AND THAT BAGAZA HAS BECOME DOMINANT INTELLECTUALLY,
AS WELL AS FORMALLY.

10. INCIDENTALLY BAGAZA AND THE PRIMIN ARE REPORTEDLY WORKING
WELL TOGETHER AFTER CONSIDERABLE FRICTION ABOUT THREE
MONTHS AGO, AND NZAMBIMANA'S VIGOR AND METHODICAL WORK HABITS
ARE POSITIVE FACTORS IN OUR CAUTIOS OPTIMISM ABOUT THE NEW
GOVERNMENT, AS LONG AS BAGAZA REMAINS THE PRIME MOVER, AS NOW.
IN FACT, NZAMBIMANA'S INITIAL TENDENCY TO SUPPORT HIS OWN
MATANA FACTION (AND THUS TO RUN COUNTER TO BAGAZA) SEEMS TO
BE MUCH ATTENUATED WITH SIMBANANIYE'S ASSIGNMENT OVERSEAS, AND
WITH THE SLIGHT WEAKENING OF THE PRIMIN'S POLITICAL POSITION
THAT HAS ACCOMPANIED FAIRLY WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE OF HIS parti-
CIPATION IN SOME OF THE CORRUPTION OF THE MICOMBERO REGIME,
WHEN HE WAS MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

11. FINALLY I SHOULD NOTE MY MEETING ON MARCH 30 WITH ANDRE
YANDA, NOW DIRECTOR OF THE TOP PARTY BUREAU, BUT IN PAST YEARS
AN ANTI-WESTERN AND RADICAL MARRXIST INTELLECTUAL, WITH LONG
YEARS AT THE TOP OF THE UPRONA PARTY, AND WITH A FAIRLY RECENT
STINT AS AMBASSADOR TO TANZANIA. I HAD BEEN TOLD THAT YANDA
HAD MUCH MELLOWED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS AND WAS NOW MUCH MORE
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PRAGMATIC AND LESS IDEOLOGICAL IN HIS OUTLOOK. THIS CERTAINLY
WAS THE IMPRESSION THAT HE GAVE ME. AGAIN, THERE WAS NO MENTION
OF "SOCIALISM" AND NO LENINIST ORGANIZATIONAL JARGON. INSTEAD,
THERE WAS A MODEST EXPLSITION OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS, A
DETERMINATION TO MAKE GRADUAL BUT BASIC CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY-
SIDE OVER A DECADE OR MORE, AND A PLEA FOR THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT
OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE.

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